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Survey of Ethno-medicinal Climbing plants in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India

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Abstract

A floristic survey of ethno-medicinal climbing plants in Andaman and Nicobar Islands was conducted to assess the potentiality of plants resources for modern treatments. In the present study enumerates 116 ethno-medicinal climbing plant species belonging to 37 families used by the tribal communities of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in treatment of several indigenous diseases. Menispermaceae (9 species) is the most dominance climber family regarding health care of Andamanese. This work is an effort to present the traditional phytotherapeutical and ethnobotanical observations recorded with respect to snake bite.

Key-Words: Climbing plants, tribal, ethno-medical, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Introduction

Ethnobotany is the scientific study of the relationships that exists between people and plants. In India, there are about 54 million indigenous people of different ethnic groups inhibiting various terrains. Over 16,000 species of higher plants occur in India, of which approximately 9,000 are known to be economically useful. Of these, 7500 are used for healthcare by various ethnic communities in India (Arora, 1997). Ghosh and Mukherjee (2006) recorded 149 herbaceous climbers and 79 lianas from North Andaman covering 55 families while Mahajan (2006) reported 31 taxa used by tribal people of Nimar region (M.P.) to cure various human ailments. According to M. Ajaib *et al*., (2012), the local people of District Kotli, Azad Jammu & Kashmir use 36 climbers/twinners of vascular plants for medicines, vegetables and fodder; 42 climbing species use by local people of Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh (Agarwal, 2013).

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are considered to be a hot spot of biodiversity of medicinal plants. Diversity of climbing flora of North Andaman Islands was surveyed by Ghosh (2012). Out of 2500 angiospermic species distributed across the island territory, the aboriginalas, viz, Nicobarese, Shompen, Jarawas, Sentinels, Ongese and Great Andamanese use 52 species as mediciaments (Das, *et al*., 2006).

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The medicinal plants commonly used by the locals and tribes, those found in the forests and surroundings. An appropriate dosage to prepare drug from different parts of plant body like root, stem, leaves, flowers, fruits, barks, seed, rhizomes, bulbs, tubers are prescribed as a remedy to treat different kind of diseases and disorders. A considerable number of studies have been published on the ethnobotany and ethnomedicine of many tribal groups in different regions of Andaman Islands (Bhargava, 1983; Chakraborty and Vasudeva, 1988; Dagar, 1989; Dagar and Dager, 1991; Sheeja, *et al*., 2001; Ghosh, 2014a, Ghosh, 2014b). No comprehensive work is available for climbers in the study area. Therefore, the objective of the present study was to document the angiospermic climbers of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and their uses by tribe and local people of the area.

Material and Methods

The Andaman and Nicobar islands, a landmass of 572 islands, isles, rocks and reefs, about 1200 km from the mainland India, is located between the latitude of 6° to 14° N and longitude of 92° to 94° E, covering an area of 8249 km^2 and it covers South, Middle, North, Little Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The present work is the outcome of extensive field survey during 2002-2005, at different corners of the Islands; as many climbing species could be identified which are used to treatment of sexual disorders (Ghosh, 2014a), snake bite (Ghosh, 2014b), and several other diseases of the tribal people (Nicobarese, Shompen, Jarawas, and Great Andamanese). Interview based field study and guided field work was done; also information gathered by literature (Bhargava, 1983;

Chakraborty and Vasudeva, 1988; Dagar, 1989; Dagar and Dager, 1991). Information about the medicinal uses of those climbing plants was also collected from the tribal people inhibiting these islands.

The method, which are used to collect the data:

(a). Plants were collected and preserved in the form of herbarium (Jain and Rao, 1976) and were deposited at the CU Herbarium.

(b). The information was collected from the old persons of the area.

(c). Interviews were conducted during structured questionnaire prepared for traditional medicinal Practitioners.

(d). Plants were identified and nomenclature with the help of published flora (Perkinson, 1923; Hooker, 1872-1885; Gamble & Fisher, 1921-1935; Mathew, 1991).

Results and Discussion

The data on medicinal climbing plants was collected from tribal, local people were analyzed. The enumeration and utilization of these are described in Table 1. The present study revealed the information of plants used for the treatment of several disorders. These plants are arranged in alphabetical order; with their family, part/ parts used and folk use.

In the present investigation 116 species of medicinal climbing plants belongs to 37 families, total 78 genera were used for the treatment of different diseases. Out of the 37 families 6 were belongs to monocotyledons and 30 families were dicotyledons. The major plant families used by the tribals and local peoples for their health care are Menispermaceae (9 species), followed by Convolvaceae, Papilionaceae, and Vitaceae (8 species).

The high degree of consensus among the information suggests that the knowledge about the plants used in several day-to-day life to cure various diseases are still strong. Thus studies exploring pharmacopoeia of unrelated cultures for plants treating specific medical conditions present one way of validating anecdotal field reports, corroborating and selecting promising lead plants and conservation of potentially threatened species.

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Table 1: Enumeration of different climbing plants used by tribe and local people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Sl. No.	Specimen Name	Family	Medicinal Importance
1	*Abrus precatorius* L.	Papilionaceae	The roots are antidiarrheic, emetic, alexiteri and antidysenteric. Decoction of leaves is ued by the Nicobarese for asthmatic troubles.
2	*Abrus pulchellus* Wall. ex. Thw.	Papilionaceae	Decoction made from roots used as remedy for colic infection. Leaves are chewed to improve voice.
3	*Acacia andamanica* Nielsen	Mimosaceae	Used for treating premature ejaculation, and astringent.
4	*Acacia pennata* (L.) Willd.	Mimosaceae	Shoots are used in soups, and curries.
5	*Adenia cardiophylla* (Masters) Engler	Passifloraceae	Nicobarese use the vine in body ache, fish poison, ringworm, and conjunctivitis.
6	*Adenia trilobata* (Roxb.) Engl.	Passifloraceae	Used as headache, snake-bite and stomach trouble.
7	*Aganosma marginata* (Roxb.) G. Don	Apocynaceae	Used in emmenagogue, fever, tonic and urogenital.
8	*Allamanda cathartica* L.	Apocynaceae	Used as febrifuge.
9	*Alyxia reinwardtii* var. *meiantha* (stap) Markgraf	Apocynaceae	The leaf extert is used as headache relief.
10	*Ampelocissus barbata* (Wall.) Planch.	Vitaceae	Used as edible fruits, swellings, boils, sprains, cuts, bolis, cholera and rheumatism.
11	*Anamitra cocculus* (L.) Wight & Arn.	Menispermaceae	The infusion of root is used to treat fever, dyspepsia and menstrual trubles.
12	*Ancistrocladus attenuatus* Dyer	Ancistrocladaceae	Used in dysentery and malaria.
13	*Ancistrocladus tectorius* (Lour.) Merr.	Ancistrocladaceae	Used as anti-malarial madicine.
14	*Aristolochia tagala* Chamisso	Aristolochiaceae	The whole plant is used as snake-bite remedies and to stimulate the menstrual flow.
15	*Asparagus racemosus* Willd.	Liliaceae	Roots used in excess bleeding during menstrual discharge and burning sensation in urine.
16	*Atalantia monophylla* DC.	Rutaceae	Used as respiratory problem and rheumatism.
17	*Bauhinia stipularis* Korth.	Caesalpiniaceae	Used as dysentry, febrifuge and fish poison.
18	*Bougainvillea spectabilis* Willd.	Nyctaginaceae	Used as cold remidies.
19	*Bridelia cinnamomea* Hook.f	Euphorbiaceae	Used as astringent and piscicide.
20	*Byttneria andamanensis* Kurz	Sterculiaceae	Bark yields mucilage, used for making hair wash. It is said to possess medicinal properties.
21	*Byttneria grandifolia* DC.	Sterculiaceae	The leaves are used by the *Nicobarese* ladies at the time of delivery.

22	*Caesalpinia andamanica* (Prain) Hattink	Caesalpiniaceae	Used as tonic, antiperiodic, colic and red eye.
23	*Caesalpinia bonduc* (L.) Roxb.	Caesalpiniaceae	Used as antidote, cirrhosis, cough diarrhea, emmenagogue, hematochezia, jaundic, and swelling.
24	*Caesalpinia crista* L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Used as tooth ache, antiperiodic, snake bite, colic, fever, pimple, malaria, skin, tonic and swelling.
25	*Caesalpinia hymenocarpa* (Prain) Hattink	Caesalpiniaceae	Used as tonic; source of lubricant and soap.
26	*Calamus pseudo-rivalis* Becc.	Arecaceae	The cane is used for making furniture, boxes, baskets etc. also used for making rough cordage, matting and fiber trunks.
27	*Calycopteris floribunda* (Roxb.) Lam.	Combretaceae	Used as astringent and laxative.
28	*Capparis sepiaria* L.	Cappariadaceae	Used as alterative, fever, skin and tonic.
29	*Capparis zeylanica* L.	Cappariadaceae	Used as anodyne, antihydrotic, boil, cholera, colic, sedative, sore, stomachic and swelling.
30	*Cardiospermum halicacabum* L.	Sapindaceae	Used as diuretic, emetic, purgative, buboes, sore eyes, aperient, rheumatism and nervous disorders.
31	*Cayratia pedata* (Lam.) Juss. Ex Gagnep.	Vitaceae	Used in violent headaches.
32	*Cayratia trifolia* (L.) Domin	Vitaceae	Used as fever, itch, rhinosis and sore.
33	*Celastrus paniculatus* Willd.	Celastraceae	Used as an opium antidote stimulant, rheumatic pain, leprosy, abortion, leucoderma, bitter, paralysis, and beriberi.
34	*Cissampelos pareira* L.	Menispermaceae	Used as fish bait, eye diseases, snake-bite, febrifuge, diarrhea, colic, tonic, and diuretic.
35	*Cissus discolor* Bl.	Vitaceae	Used as edible fruits, sore eyes and snake bite.
36	*Cissus elongata* Roxb.	Vitaceae	Plant juce is applied to shores, wonds and cuts by the Nicobares and Onges and also used in insect bites, sweeling, scabies and featers. Plant decoction is used to reduce fever and considered antiperiodic in malaria.
37	*Cissus pentagona* Roxb.	Vitaceae	Used in headache, boils, and stomach-ache.
38	*Cissus repens* Lam.	Vitaceae	Used as edible fruits and also leather preparation before tanning.
39	*Clematis smilacifolia* Wall. Subsp. *andamanica* Kapoor	Ranunculaceae	Used as diuretics and cordage.
40	*Clitoria ternate* L.	Papilionaceae	Root and seed is used in epilepsy.
41	*Coccinia grandis* (L.) J. Voigt.	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits are edible, used in scabies, smallpox and febrifuge.
42	*Cocculus hirsutus* (L.) Diels	Menispermaceae	Used as snake- and insect-bite, skin allergies.
43	*Cocculus pendulus* (J.R. & G. Forst.) Diels	Menispermaceae	Used as febrifuge and promotes menstrution.
44	*Colubrina asiatica* (L.) Brongn.	Rhamnaceae	Used as abortifacient, headache, fever, fracture, piscicide, pneumonia, shampoo and soap.
45	*Combretum latifolium* Bl.	Combretaceae	Fruits are medicinal and used as tonic.
46	*Connarus semidecandrus* Jack.	Connaraceae	Root decoction is used as colic.
47	Cryptolepis buchananii *Schultes*	Asclepiadaceae	The roots and fruits are used for the treatment of chills and edema.
48	*Cryptolepis sinensis* (Loureiro) Merr.	Asclepiadaceae	The stems and leaves are used externally for the treatment of snakebites, traumatic injury, and scabies. A fine, strong bast fiber, obtained from the inner bark, is used for making ropes.
49	*Cuscuta reflexa* Roxb.	Convolvulaceae	Used as shampoo and purgative.
50	*Cyathostemma viridiflorum* Griff.	Anonaceae	Used as tonic, aphrodisiac.

51	*Daemonorops kurzianus* Becc	Arecaceae	Leaves are used for thatching huts. Stem and young leaves – eaten, sedative, tonic.
52	*Derris andaminaca* Prain	Papilionaceae	Used as fish poison.
53	*Derris scandens* (Roxb.) Bth.	Papilionaceae	The plant is ornamental. Bark is reported to yield Benth a corse fiber. Plant is used as fish poison.
54	*Desmos cochinchinensis* Lour.	Anonaceae	Used as edible fruits and increases lactation.
55	*Dioscorea alata* L.	Dioscoreaceae	Used for digestive problems, speed recovery from kidney and spleen disorders.
56	*Dioscorea bulbifera* L.	Dioscoreaceae	Tuber used as contraceptive, birth control.
57	*Dioscorea esculenta* (Loureiro) Burkill	Dioscoreaceae	Used as edible tubers and to treat kidney troubles
58	*Dioscorea hispida* Dennstedt	Dioscoreaceae	Used for syphilictic sores, and for arthritic and rheumatic pain.
59	*Dischidia nummularia* R. Brown	Asclepiadaceae	Used as fish stings eczema, herpes, boils, goiter diurretic.
60	Entada rheedei *Spr.*	Mimosaceae	Used as astringent, snake-bites, and hair treatment soap.
61	*Erycibe expansa* Wall. ex G. Don	Convolvulaceae	Used as skin rash and speeds labour delivery.
62	*Flagellaria indica* L.	Flagellariaceae	Stems and fruits are edible. Plant has diuretic properties and young leaves as shampoo.
63	*Gloriosa superba* L.	Liliaceae	Tubers are crushed into a paste, heated slightly, and applied to the abdomen and vulva as an aid to childbirth; they are also used to induce abortion.
64	*Gouania andamanica* var. *andamanica* King	Rhamnaceae	Roots and shoots are crushed to yield a soapy liquid.
65	*Gouania leptostachya* DC.	Rhamnaceae	Used to wash hair.
66	*Gymnema latifolium* Wall. ex Wight	Asclepiadaceae	Used as emetic.
67	*Harrisonia brownii* A.H.L.Juss.	Simaroubaceae	Used in diarrhea.
68	*Hippocratea grahamii* Wight	Celastraceae	Root decoction is used as tonic, an emmenagogue and is given post partum.
69	*Hoya globulosa* Hook.f.	Asclepiadaceae	Used to treat poisonous fish stings, in soothe gonorrhea and to encourage healing of wounds and varicose ulcers.
70	*Ichnocarpus frutescens* (L.) W. T. Aiton	Apocynaceae	A fine, strong fiber obtained from the inner bark is used in making ropes and sacks. The seeds are used for the treatment of rheumatism and the stem and leaves for acute urticaria.
71	*Ipomoea aquatica* Forsskal.	Convolvulaceae	Plants are used in general weakness, nervousness, and edible.
72	*Ipomoea nil* (L.) Roth.	Convolvulaceae	Used as insecticide and an anthelmintic.
73	*Ipomoea pes-caprae* (L.) R. Brown	Convolvulaceae	Used for edema, rheumatism, sores, ulcers and boils.
74	*Ipomoea pes-tigridis* L.	Convolvulaceae	The plant is reported to be used as soil binder. Leaf paste mixed in water is taken in blood dysentery and applied on burns and scalds.
75	*Jacquemontia paniculata* (N. L. Burman) H. Hallier	Convolvulaceae	Used in swellings.
76	*Jasminum cordifolium* Wall.	Oleaceae	Leaves are used in toothache. Flowers are in oily preparation for piles.
77	*Jasminum sambac* (L.) Aiton	Oleaceae	The flowers are used as to make scented tea, and are used in ear, nose, throat diseases,
78	*Korthalsia laciniosa* (Griff.) Mart.	Arecaceae	Cane is used for making walking sticks. Leaves are eaten by elephants. Jarwas make shafts of their arrows from stem.
79	*Luffa cylindrica* (L.) M. Roemer	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits are edible, kitchen utensil, febrifuge, purgative and emetic.

80	*Lygodium flexuosum* (L.) Sw.	Lygodiaceae	Used to make huts, basket work and to store betle-nuts.
81	*Merremia umbellata subsp. orientalis* (H. Hallier) van Ooststroom	Convolvulaceae	Used as edible tubers, leaves purgative, snake bite, thrush, diuretic and anthelmintic.
82	*Momordica charantia* L.	Cucurbitaceae	Leaves are used in sprue, asthma and skin affictions.
83	*Momordica cochinchinensis* Spreng.	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits are edible, and used as a resolvent of abscesses and mumps, to treat edema and rheumatism.
84	*Mucuna gigantea* (Willd.) DC.	Papilionaceae	Boiled seeds and raw pods are reported to be eaten by the Nicobarese. The powdered seed are said to be aphrodisiac and used as purgative.
85	*Olax imbricata* Roxb.	Olacaceae	The fruits are edible and reported to possess medicinal properties.
86	*Paederia foetida* L.	Rubiaceae	Used in prodtitis, gout, dysentery, flatulence, eye infections, toothache, ringworm and malaria.
87	*Paederia scandens* (Lour.) Merr.	Rubiaceae	Used as digestive, antirhematic, stomachic and tonic.
88	*Paramignya andamanica* (King) Tan.	Rutaceae	The aromatic leaves and fruits cooked with little water provide a liquid for treatment of cough and bronchitis.
89	*Parsonsia alboflavescens* (Dennstedt) Mabberley	Apocynaceae	The leaf is applied to leg swellings, disinfectant, tuberculosis, vulnerary febrifuge, rheumatism and kidnyeys.
90	*Passiflora foetida* L.	Passifloraceae	Edible fruits, snake-bite, hypertension, anti-inflammatory, diabetes, bone breakages, itching, and wounds.
91	*Pathos scandens* L.	Araceae	Stem is mixed with camphor and smoked for relief in asthma. Powered leaves are applied to small pox pustules. Leaf decoction is administered post partum. Leaves used to treat worms, convulsions, small pox and asthama.
92	*Piper betle* L.	Piperaceae	Used as a masticatory, constipation, wounds, boils lumbago, aromatic, stimulant, and contraceptive.
93	*Piper longum* L.	Piperaceae	Used to flavor cigarettes, food, bitters and throat lozenges.
94	*Pycnarrhena longifolia* (Decne ex Miq.) Bece.	Menispermaceae	Used as tonic, cicatrizant and snake-bites.
95	*Quisqualis indica* L.	Combretaceae	Stems are used as cordage, dried fruits and seeds are important anthelmintics.
96	*Sarcostemma acidum* (Roxb.) Voigt	Asclepiadaceae	Used to kills cow skin parasites and twine. Seashore thickets. All parts are used as medicine to induce lactation.
97	*Smilax aspericaulis* Wall. ex A. de Candolle	Smilacaceae	Roots are used as treatment of rheumatism
98	*Smilax bracteata* C. Presl.	Smilacaceae	Used as vine boiled with pisabik stone powder and used as malicious magic.
99	*Smilax glabra* Roxb.	Smilacaceae	Used in gout, rheumatism, skin diseases, urogenital diseases, asthma, and tumour.
100	*Smilax ovalifolia* Roxb.	Smilacaceae	Roots are used to cure abnormal discharge of semem and other uterine diseases.
101	*Smilax zeylanica* L.	Smilacaceae	Roots are used to cure white discharge.
102	*Stephania andamanica* Diels	Menispermaceae	Used as anthelmintic, and sedative.
103	*Stephania japonica* (Thunb.) Miers	Menispermaceae	Leaves are used to treatment of leucorrhoea and birth control.
104	*Strophanthus wallichii* A. de Candolle	Apocynaceae	Bark and leaves are reported to contain cardiac glycosides. Seeds are poisonous.
105	*Strychnos anandamanensis* Hill.	Loganiaceae	Used as ingredients in native arrow poisons.
106	*Strychnos minor* Dennst.	Loganiaceae	The older women chew the bitter roots to cure the prolapsed of the

			uterus.
107	*Strychnos wallichiana* Steudel ex A. de Candolle	Loganiaceae	A decoction of root is used in rheumatism, ulcers, fever and epilepsy.
108	*Tetrastigma lanceolarium* (Roxb.) Planchon in A. & C. DC.	Vitaceae	Used in headache, fever, boils and dropsy.
109	*Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Hook.f. & Thomson	Menispermaceae	Used in asthma, rheumatism; febrifuge.
110	*Tinospora glabra* (Burm.f.) Merr.	Menispermaceae	Used as febrifuge, tetanus and jaundice.
111	*Tournefortia ovata* Wall. ex G. Don	Boraginaceae	Used as purgative, snake bites influenza, insect stings, and female problem.
112	*Uncaria sessilifructus* Roxb.	Rubiaceae	Used in disorders of the alimentary canal, urinary tract problem; leaves is given to treat diarrhea and dysentery.
113	*Vigna adenantha* (G. F. Meyer) Marechal & Stainier	Papilionaceae	Edible seeds, pods, stems, leaves, and fiber for weaving.
114	*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp. ssp. *cylindrical* (L.) van Eseltine	Papilionaceae	Edible seeds. Seeds are used to treatment of fristula, jaundice, tumor, and smallpox.
115	*Ziziphus oenoplia* (L.) Mill var. *oenoplia*	Rhamnaceae	The bark is used as medicine in swelling in cheek and ulcer in mouth in powder form mixing with ghee.
116	*Ziziphus oenoplia* (L.) Mill Var. *pallens* Bhandari & Bhansali	Rhamnaceae	The bark is used for tanning. The root possesses medicinal properties.

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